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ANGLETON

The Cult of Counterintelligence

By Seymour M. Hersh

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THE ANGLETON STORY

From forced retirement, James Jesus Angleton wages covert war on those who, he feels, have weakened the C.I.A. The man and the issues raise important questions about the intelligence game.

By Seymour M. Hersh

Early in the morning on Dec. 22, 1974, the day The New York Times ran the first of my series of reports on domestic spying by the Central Intelligence Agency, I got a phone call from James Angleton, who was identified in my story as the C.I.A.'s director of counter-intelligence.

"Do you know what you've done?" he said. "You've blown my cover. My wife, in 31 years of marriage, was never aware of my activity until your story. And now she's left me."

Angleton's office, I had been told by my Government sources, had directed the agency's illegal domestic activities, which had included amassing files on as many as 10,000 Americans and opening private mail, in violation of the Congressional statute barring the C.I.A. from intelligence operations within the United States. Nevertheless, I was stunned by the despair in his voice and mumbled some apology about a newsman's responsibility to the truth.

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I quickly telephoned a friend who had worked with Angleton in the C.I.A. My friend laughed.

"I can tell you," he said, "that Cicely did leave him, but not because of you. She left him about three years ago to go live out in Arizona."

She had since returned. "Of course," my friend added, "she knows all about the C.I.A."

I had come across Angleton while gathering material for the C.I.A. series. In fact, I had had a long phone conversation with him just a few days previously. While denying any involvement in domestic spying, he suddenly began blurting out what I thought was highly secret information about alleged links between foreign Communist governments and domestic opponents of the Vietnam War. He told me of an agent "still active and still productive" in Moscow who was providing information about antiwar bombings inside the

United States. He spoke of tracing Black Panthers to North Korea, where, he said, they were trained in the use of explosives. When I checked these allegations with other informed Government officials, they scoffed. There was no evidence, they said, of anything like that.

By the time the first of my domestic-spying stories appeared, James Angleton was through — his forced resignation, and those of his top aides, made known through the C.I.A. underground. But that was only a coincidence, the informants said, revealing that William E. Colby, the Director of Central Intelligence, had been pressing for Angleton's retirement for months.

Angleton's side of the story was not long in coming. He had developed many friends and admirers among the press, and some newspaper columnists and magazines suggested in subsequent articles that Colby had inspired The Times's series as part of his effort to oust Angleton, who had entrenched himself as the C.I.A.'s guardian of internal security the way J. Edgar Hoover had entrenched himself at the F.B.I. The portrait of Angleton that emerged from these articles was one of a meticulous and brilliant intelligence operative who was also an accomplished fisherman, a prize-winning orchid grower and a poet. A former C.I.A. agent, Miles Copeland, said in a London Times article that "any journalist who reports on the C.I.A. should know that Jim Angleton's 'indiscretions' are all carefully calculated but that, at the same time, old 'Kingfish' is the most clinically objective authority in Washington on his particular subject." The subject, of course, was counterintelligence — the art of preventing any other intelligence service from penetrating your own, and, if possible, of converting their agents into double agents working for you.

I began to wonder: Who was this master spycatcher with a lifelong interest in Ezra Pound and Dante and a penchant for startling statements during conversations with journalists on the phone? I started asking around, and the Angleton I gradually came to know appeared to be a different Angleton from the man others were writing about. It seemed to me that trying to understand this intelligence agent extraordinary could be a key to something of larger importance — the widely credited myth, with its pervasive effect on Congress, that somehow the C.I.A. and the people who run it are more competent and more knowing than the rest of us.

This search seems even more appropriate today. Angleton once again has become relevant to the issue — grown almost into a national debate — of what the C.I.A.'s mission should and should not be. He is, in effect, waging covert

Angleton emerges from one of the 1975 Presidential panel hearings on the C.I.A.

war on the C.I.A.'s new counterintelligence leaders over the one aspect of the problem that for him is *the* issue — the C.I.A.'s ability to withstand Soviet penetration. Though an outsider now, he is still on the scene, in his behind-the-scenes fashion. He has become a source for many current newspaper articles and books with considerable impact on public opinion.

For example, there is the recent widely reviewed book "Legend," by Edward Jay Epstein, with its suggestion that the public perception of Lee Harvey Oswald as a disturbed loner may be a K.G.B. cover story — that President Kennedy's assassin may have been recruited by the Soviets (though not with assassination in mind). The book is based partially on interviews with Angleton, and the Oswald theory goes back to an old case involving a Soviet defector named Yuri Nosenko.

One of the first things Nosenko told the C.I.A. when he came over in 1964 was that Oswald had *not* been recruited by the K.G.B. during his years in the Soviet Union. Angleton was skeptical. The Russian was placed in virtual solitary confinement and intensively interrogated for much of the next three years by Angleton and other counterintelligence men. Finally cleared as a credible source, Nosenko was relocated in North Carolina and placed on the C.I.A. payroll as a consultant. Angleton, however, remained convinced that Nosenko was a K.G.B. "disinformation" plant — even though, immediately after his defection, Nosenko had provided the C.I.A. with information that led to the arrest of at least two Soviet agents and to the shutting-down of a major K.G.B. ring in France that had been spying on NATO. The Epstein book appears to reflect Angleton's view of this episode and of its significance for our day. "With Nosenko accredited and the counterintelligence staff purged [by Colby]," Epstein writes in conclusion, "the C.I.A. has truly been turned inside out."

Former C.I.A. head Colby: "naive"?

Angleton's fundamental message — that the C.I.A. counterintelligence capability has been seriously weakened by his ouster — is an article of faith with his former aides. "Counterintelligence just isn't a trade you can learn in a day," one of them said to me recently. "There's an awful lot of data you must know, an awful lot of reading you must do." He said he and Angleton once estimated that it took a young C.I.A. recruit five years to become a sophisticated counterintelligence agent. "The K.G.B.'s got the agency on the ropes," he added. "Whether they can bring in a Sunday punch at this point we don't know yet. The capability for C.I. [counterintelligence] and for the whole agency has been damaged."

Other present and past officials of the C.I.A. dismissed such notions when I talked to them. These men, who are among Angleton's critics, insist that the C.I.A.'s intelligence is as good as ever and that its counterintelligence is now more rational. They concede that the agency has come under closer control by Congress and the White House, but they see this as an inevitable result of the agency's past excesses.

"The real question," said one former high-level C.I.A. official, "is: Did any of the C.I.A. directors ever really know all of what Angleton's office was doing? My guess is no."

What his office was doing, Angleton told a Senate Intelligence Committee hearing on the mail-intercept program, was — among other things — ferreting out "foreign involvement" in the United States. And judging from a statement he made at an earlier closed-door meeting with Senate investigators, this responsibility, in his mind, went pretty far. "It is inconceivable," he said to the investigators, "that a secret intelligence arm of the Government has to comply with all the overt orders of the Government." When, at the public hearing, Senator Richard S. Schweiker, reading from the record, asked him if that was an accurate quotation, Angleton replied, "Well, if it is accurate, it should not have been said."

Angleton's real talking, since leaving the agency, has been off the record. For example, he is the principal figure among a small group of former C.I.A. officials who have been running a murky vendetta against William Colby. These men seem to believe that in cooperating as he did with the various Congressional inquiries into the C.I.A. in 1975, the former director aided and abetted the K.G.B. In their whispering campaign, some of these former subordinates have gone so far as to insinuate that Colby may have acted not just as an obedient if naïve public servant but as a Soviet agent, a "mole" secreted at the center of the American intelligence establishment.

One thing they can't forgive is his decision to provide the Justice Department with files bearing on the sworn Congressional testimony of Richard Helms, Director of Central Intelligence from 1966 to 1973. The information in those files indicated that Helms had lied when he denied before a Senate committee that the C.I.A. had engaged in covert operations in Chile. After much indecision within the Government, Helms was permitted last year to plead nolo contendere to misdemeanor charges. If Colby had not chosen to cooperate with the investigators, his detractors argue, Helms would have been spared his public disgrace.

"Once you let the toothpaste out of the tube," said one Colby critic, "you can't get it back in."

Yet Angleton's former aides seem to have been letting out some toothpaste themselves lately — the C.I.A. counterintelligence division's role in helping Israel become a nuclear power. The veteran journalist Tad Szulc has quoted "sources close to" Angleton as confirming that the C.I.A. secretly aided the Israelis with technical nuclear information in the late 1950's. This fits in with something I had been told by a high-level C.I.A. official — that Angleton, then in charge of C.I.A. liaison with Israeli intelligence, gave the Israelis similar technical information in the mid-60's. Angleton won't talk openly on the subject, which is now under investigation by a House Commerce subcommittee, but many Government officials believe he has answers to the questions raised by these allegations — and answers to other questions in other areas yet to be explored.

This makes some C.I.A. men nervous. Their concern is not only over what Angleton says but over his use of classified papers. One Congressional investigator recalled a recent lunch in the Army and Navy Club in Washington. "Angleton pulled out a bunch of documents" — highly secret C.I.A. material. When the investigator later asked the C.I.A. to produce copies of the papers, he was told they could not be located.

It was an admittedly unusual situation. But, for Angleton, the unusual has always been routine.

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In Angleton's heyday, from the early 50's to 1973, his counterintelligence of-

K.G.B. double agent Philby and medal (inscribed "Workers of the world unite!") awarded him by Russians. Was he uncovered by Angleton or did he lead him astray?

fice was the most sacrosanct unit inside the C.I.A., a "deep snow" section whose operations were kept secret even from other top officials. There was no such indignity in Angleton's office as the annual investigation by the agency's inspector general, a period in which some of the other sections had to clean up and alter records to avoid curtailment of some unauthorized derring-do. His was a twilight world of defectors, disinformation, deception and penetration. His were among the most difficult judgments to be made in the global chess game between the intelligence services of the Soviet Union and the United States.

Was the high-level C.I.A. official whom a Soviet defector had named as a double agent really a double agent? Or was the charge part of a Soviet plan to create confusion in the C.I.A.'s upper ranks? Who was the new Soviet diplomat suddenly assigned to Lagos? Should the C.I.A. cooperate with French intelligence on an operation in Western Europe?

Many of Angleton's former colleagues, as I began making inquiries, assured me that his skepticism of any mellowing on the part of the Communist world and his unrelenting suspicion of the K.G.B. had proved invaluable. One former high-ranking C.I.A. official described him as "probably the best homegrown intelligence operative this country has ever produced." He "had power"; he was "secure"; he "always had the ear of the Director." As for the participation of his division in illegal C.I.A. activities within the United States, one former agency official delivered himself of a passionate defense:

"Look, you can legislate against violations of the [C.I.A.] charter, you can set up committees to investigate us, but you can never understand a clandestine organization unless you're involved in it. No Congressman and no Senator can understand it. It's so intense, so compassionate.

"The Ameri- *(Continued on Page 61)*

Former C.I.A. chief Helms: A victim?

can people and the Congress have to trust us. You can't legislate morality and integrity. We had a job to do for the United States Government, and we did it. We all faced our moral crises, our personal Gethsemanes, and had to do some jobs by any means possible.

"Everybody who knows Jim knows that he's the most trustworthy, loyal friend you could have in life. He's absolutely brilliant."

But what had he *done*? What were his substantive achievements?

In one magazine article shortly after his resignation, a longtime friend of Angleton's wrote that "the number of spies who have been caught in Angleton's net runs into the dozens." I checked that with other C.I.A. officials, and they were more restrained. They said that many of the spies "caught" by him and his staff had, in fact, been turned in by defectors, and that many of the defectors were cold-war refugees whose information was, at best, self-serving.

The article said that the famed K.G.B. double agent, Harold "Kim" Philby, was uncovered on the basis of information supplied by Angleton. Yet two of Angleton's former C.I.A. colleagues told me that Philby had managed to strike up a friendship with Angleton in Washington while serving with British intelligence in the early 50's. They often lunched together. Far from exposing Philby, one of my informants said, "Jim did get screwed by Philby, and it helped make him cautious and anti-Russian." Others told me it was not Angleton but another C.I.A. official, William Harvey, who had been the first to express doubts about Philby's loyalty.

If it's perhaps impossible for a journalist to make a definitive appraisal of a counterintelligence chief's performance, some generalities about Angleton's political beliefs were easier to establish. He was, clearly, a hard-line anti-Communist, convinced that the K.G.B. had penetrated deeply into American society. During the Vietnam War, he was outspoken in his contempt for and suspicion of journalists whose reporting conflicted with the official line. He still clings to the view, which he advocated forcefully within the C.I.A., that the Sino-Soviet breach is not real but a disinformation operation concocted by the K.G.B. After Henry Kissinger made his dramatic 1971 trip to Peking to restore relations with China, Angleton, according to one acquaintance, expressed suspicions about "whether the K.G.B. had its arm on Kissinger."

Similarly, he argued inside the C.I.A. that the split between Joseph Stalin and Marshal Tito had been artificially created by Soviet intelligence in an effort to lure American investments to Yugoslavia and thus enable Tito to take economic advantage of the United States. As for détente, he has voiced suspicions that that, too, may be part of a Soviet in-

telligence plot to weaken American defenses. A former longtime C.I.A. official who met with Angleton shortly before his ouster found him concerned that "too many members of the press had ties to Russia." "Anybody who wrote anything friendly to the Soviet Union," the official told me, "he considers suspect."

These apparently deeply held beliefs, which seemed to have been shared by many of his men in the counterintelligence unit, were a source of dismay and embarrassment to most of the present and past C.I.A. officials to whom I talked about Angleton. One former official, who served as an aide to Richard Helms when Helms was director, recalled that Angleton would occasionally give his views of the Sino-Soviet split at staff meetings, "and everybody would just look at one another and shrug.... Our view of the counterintelligence staff ranged from comical to one of horror." Angleton's forced resignation was welcomed by many of his colleagues as ridding the agency of a high-level element of irrationality.

How is it, then, that a man of such peculiar views should have risen so high in the intelligence establishment?

One answer that emerged from my interviews had to do with a kind of tolerance of overzealousness in a good cause. Many of the people to whom Angleton owed his rise were men with an instinctive fear and hatred of Communism, carried over from their postwar intelligence work in Europe, who believed that the Soviet Union was waiting for American willpower to be drained away before moving directly against us. For such men, a degree of immoderation in a security chief's outlook was not hard to excuse. As a former senior C.I.A. official, a veteran of the World War II Office of Strategic Services, explained to me, Angleton's views on the Sino-Soviet split and the Stalin-Tito quarrel were recognized as "eccentric," but "his eccentricity is far easier for me to understand than yours."

"Jim starts from the premise that the Soviet Union is a threat," the official said. "It seems to me that you fellows" — meaning journalists critical of the C.I.A. — "are missing the key point: What is that threat? The threat has changed, but you could make a case that it's even greater today." Détente could be a subtle contributing factor. In fact, he said, that was his own view.

Another former O.S.S. man, who achieved a high position in the C.I.A. before leaving to become one of Secretary of State Kissinger's direct subordinates, had a more critical evaluation of Angleton — a reflection, no doubt, of his own milder view of the Soviet threat. "Jim came to believe that because the K.G.B. was so devious and so deceptive, it planned practically everything in the world. He organized world history in terms of what he believed and was interested in." Yet this official, too, thought that for a man in Angleton's position to be overly suspicious provided, if anything, an extra margin of safety, and he praised Angleton for running "a pretty effective counterintelligence staff."

"I wouldn't hire someone with views like yours or mine to run counterintelligence," he said. "You're too naïve about the Soviets. And me? I tend to be tainted by a streak of humanity."

The former Helms aide who did not share in this sympathetic appraisal of Angleton had another explanation for his rise in the agency: "Long before I came on board, I assume Angleton may have done something useful."

From all these interviews, I eventually gained the impression that Angleton was not only a proponent of the cold war but one of its victims. The political struggles that, to one degree or another, were provoked by the Soviet Union after World War II left the West with a legacy of fear of Soviet expansionism. As in any political conflict, there were extremists on both sides, and, over the years, Angleton came to symbolize one end of the spectrum, his apprehension of the Communist threat affecting his view of all things Russian. Thus, Nosenko could not simply be a Soviet defector; he had to be a pawn in a brilliant K.G.B. attempt to undermine the political security and well-being of the United States. And if Nosenko did turn in some Soviet agents, Angleton would argue that they were agents who already had been written off by the K.G.B. The circle never ends.

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James Jesus Angleton was born in 1917 in Boise, Idaho. He was named Jesus after his maternal grandfather: His father had married a Mexican woman while serving in Mexico under Gen. John J. ("Black Jack") Pershing. The elder Angleton made a career with the National Cash Register Company and purchased the firm's franchise for Italy, where he became head of the American Chamber of Commerce in Rome. Young James, one of four children, spent the summers in Italy while attending Malvern College in England. In 1937 he entered Yale. There, he served on the editorial board of The Yale Literary Magazine (along with McGeorge Bundy, the future national-security adviser to Presidents Kennedy and John-

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3 MORE AIDES QUIT IN C.I.A. SHAKE-UP; FACED TRANSFERS

Resign Week After Angleton Left Amid an Un[illegible] Reports of [illegible]

The news that coincided with Colby's move against Angleton. Did stories blow his cover?

son, and Walter S. Sullivan Jr., now science editor of The New York Times) and roomed with E. Reed Whittemore Jr., the future poet. In the summer of 1939, he and Whittemore launched a poetry journal, Furioso. Contributors in the first issues included Archibald MacLeish, E. E. Cummings, Richard Eberhart, William Carlos Williams and Ezra Pound.

The brilliant roster was Angleton's doing — he had contacted all these greats and induced them to appear in the little-known, irregularly published journal — and out of this there emerged his reputation as a poet of note. A number of his personal acquaintances have described him to me as a "genius." One woman who knew him socially in the mid-60's depicted him as having "the look of a Byron — very lean and starved about the jaws. He was very handsome, really . . . an extremely brilliant man, a poet."

No, she had not read any of Angleton's poetry — neither had any of the others — and, in a search of the back issues of The Yale Literary Magazine and Furioso, I could find only one poem bearing Angleton's name. The three short stanzas, published in the May 1940 issue of The Literary Magazine and entitled "The Immaculate Conversion," included the following lines:

I murmur to see the sun and rain
Quicken to dust the flowers again
Quicken to flowers the dust again
Quicken to dust
Didn't they smell for life this year
Didn't they smell for death
Didn't they smell I ask.

The only prose Angleton was known to have published during his Yale years was an unsigned essay in the magazine bemoaning the "state of decadence" among the other undergraduate publications. The piece concluded with the instructions: "Communications should be addressed to the Editor . . . and left at George and Harry's [apparently a local bar] until called for by my messenger." It was a form of correspondence he would put to extensive use in later years.

One classmate told me that Angleton spent a good deal of his time at The College Toastie, a local hamburger joint, "pumping nickels into the pinball machines." "He was an insomniac, and he used to come by at 2 or 3 in the morning, wake me up and say, 'Let's go for a ride.' We'd go to the beach together and wait for the sun to rise. Was he making great literary plans? No. He was just working off his insomnia."

"Jim was smart and imaginative," I was told by the late Norman Holmes Pearson, professor of English and American studies at Yale until his death two years ago, "but Reed [Whittemore] was the one who wrote. Jim was the go-getter; he was the one with contacts." In 1943, with Angleton two years out of college and the country two years into World War II, Professor Pearson recruited his former student into the O.S.S. "He took to it like a dog to water," Pearson said. Angleton was married the same year to Cicely d'Autremont of Tucson, Ariz., whom he met while she was a junior at Vassar.

The young man was trained in London as an Army officer attached to the O.S.S. After the Italian landing, he was sent to Rome. He stayed on in Italy after the war, participating in clandestine operations against a perceived threat of Communist takeover. When the C.I.A. was formed in 1947, Major Angleton left the Army and joined the new agency. His first assignment was in Italy.

According to many C.I.A. officials, Angleton turned his Italian mission to excellent purpose. Working closely with Italian counterintelligence, he produced a rich lode of intelligence on the Soviets. One of Angleton's close friends told me he came home with a "treasure-trove . . . a warehouse full of Soviet documents in Italy. It took years to sort out." One of his former subordinates recalled that Angleton was widely hailed inside the C.I.A. for obtaining "a fantastic amount of code stuff."

Along with his highly praised work, Angleton had attributes that marked him for success. It was more than just having attended the right schools, knowing the right people and sharing the right tastes. He was a cultivator of friends and future subordinates with secret information to impart. He quickly learned that, in a secret organization, information is power. As one former high-level intelligence official told me, "Anybody who produces or controls information of value thereby has control over the director. Being able to show 'hot stuff' to the director, so he could then show it to the White House, was a way of maintaining power."

Angleton turned fulltime to the study of the K.G.B. He began assembling files on potential Communist agents — a basic necessity for counterintelligence. His work brought him close to the then Director, Allen W. Dulles. By 1954, to no one's surprise, he was authorized to set up the agency's counterintelligence staff. And he was given another responsibility that helped build up his personal authority — the handling of all liaison with allied intelligence. It made him the man through whom the director would learn of important secrets volunteered by allied intelligence services, and it put him in a position to control the information and misinformation passed on to the intelligence services of friendly governments.

That was when the C.I.A.'s Israeli desk came his way. Allen Dulles decided that the Israeli "account," as it was known, was too important to be entrusted to the pro-Arab specialists in the agency's Near East division — or, for that matter, to Jews with a natural contrary bias. His solution was to put it in Angleton's hands. One reason for this was that Angleton had built up broad contacts with Israeli leaders, many of whom he had met in Italy after the war.

By the late 50's, Angleton had assembled a large counterintelligence staff, dividing it into such sections as research and analysis, operations, a special Communist Party unit, and even a small group to keep track of Americans abroad, and he acquired a reputation as a diligent and demanding superior. "He was married to his job," a former subordinate said. "He used to come in Sunday afternoons, and often worked all day Saturdays."

He also accumulated an awesome amount of power. Many of the C.I.A. men I talked to had their favorite Angleton story, to illustrate the authority enjoyed and the fear inspired by the dour, professorial, chain-smoking head of counterintelligence who was always on the job and knew how to cut a man down with a look.

"He kind of scared me," said Victor Marchetti, co-author of the 1974 book, "The C.I.A. and the Cult of Intelligence," who retired in 1969 after 14 years with the agency. "Dealing with Angleton was kind of like looking at sharks." His power, Marchetti said, stemmed mainly from the widespread belief within the C.I.A. that anyone employed by the agency could be placed under surveillance by a counterintelligence branch operating on the assumption that the agency was penetrated by the K.G.B. "You wouldn't even know you were being investigated."

A man once high in the agency told me of a C.I.A. cocktail party in Georgetown at which he had somewhat exaggerated his O.S.S. exploits: "Nothing much — just made myself out to be a little more important than I really was." A few days later, Angleton, who had been at the party, quietly let him know that he had checked the O.S.S. records and had determined that he had misrepresented himself.

"I wanted nothing more to do with Jim after that," the former official said. "I'd say hello to him at parties, but nothing more."

But another incident followed.

One day, not long before Allen Dulles replaced Gen. Walter Bedell Smith as C.I.A. director in 1953, this official told his wife of General Smith's dislike of Dulles and of his brother, John Foster Dulles, then Secretary of State. The conversation took place in their bedroom. The next morning, he was summoned to Allen Dulles's office.

"What's this about Bedell Smith and me?" Dulles asked.

"Of course, " the official recounted, "I lied and said I didn't know what he was talking about." Whereupon Dulles repeated the bedroom conversation of the night before.

The official then confessed. With a smile, Dulles warned him: "You'd better watch out. Jimmy's got his eye on you."

A mystique developed around Angleton, even as his function remained an official secret. It spread into unexpected places. Shortly after my C.I.A. series began running in The Times, the headwaiter of one of Washington's better restaurants approached me and demanded: "What are you doing to my friend Jim Angleton?" He told me a story about Angleton — which, he conceded, he had heard from someone else:

In the late 60's, Angleton often entertained foreign intelligence officials at one of Washington's overpriced French restaurants, at a table always reserved for him. One day, another C.I.A. official, who also used to lunch with Angleton, came ahead of time and, as a joke, hid a fake miniature listening device in the table's flower arrangement. Angleton arrived and sat down. Within 10 minutes, he discovered the bug, pocketed it, and continued the conversation as though nothing had happened.

While such stories are probably fanciful, they seem to derive in spirit from other, more factual accounts. Here is one recollection given me by an old friend of his, a woman who, in the summer of 1961, was working for the American Embassy in Rome and lived in a housing complex maintained by the embassy for its employees.

"Angleton turned up to take me to lunch," she said. "He walked in and said hello, but before he began to talk to me, he got down on all fours and he crawled around looking for bugs. He opened the closet doors and kind of felt around with what I supposed was practiced skill. He even looked under the rug.

"I said, 'Jim, what in the hell are you doing?' He said something to the effect that you can't be too careful."

Recalling the scene, she laughed. "He doesn't really have a great deal of humor. He wasn't defensive or embarrassed about it, you know. His attitude was 'You, you jerk, don't you realize that you are in mortal danger?' He was always seeing what was under the rug."

But what, to return to an earlier question, did he actually find?

A former C.I.A. man who spent more than 15 years as an analyst in Angleton's counterintelligence unit was hard-pressed to recall any specific operations with which Angleton had been involved. Of course, there were always spies to be caught, defectors to

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be worked with, important decisions to be made. "He studied a hell of a lot of cable traffic," a former colleague said. "He always had a pile of dispatches on his desk."

Did he know of any specific occasions when Angleton prevented the penetration of the agency or foiled an operation by the K.G.B.?

"No . . . I couldn't quote you any specific examples."

Yet I did learn of a few of Angleton's successes. Perhaps because of the passage of time and the change of political climate, some of them seem less than memorable. Thus, one former official recalled that, in the early 50's, Angleton was involved in a series of (illegal) domestic mail intercepts that enabled the agency to learn how the American Federation of Labor was planning to use the millions of dollars in clandestine funds funneled to it by the C.I.A. According to the account, Angleton would personally deliver copies of the letters to Allen Dulles — and thereby "made real hay with Allen," since "it impressed Allen enormously to know in general" what the A.F.L. was planning to do.

On the other hand, there is the matter of Nikita Khrushchev's secret speech before the Soviet party congress of 1956.

Khrushchev's stunning denunciation of Stalin was obtained and made public by the C.I.A., and the impact on the world is history. And the credit goes largely to Angleton's section. The speech was apparently picked up by one of his counterintelligence contacts, somewhere in Eastern Europe, in exchange for a large cash payment.

That it took a bribe to get a copy of a speech given before thousands of Communist delegates from all over the world underscores for some C.I.A. analysts the agency's chronic inability to penetrate the upper reaches of the international Communist party apparatus. But that may be caviling. The C.I.A. did get the speech — and, after retiring from his 10 years with the agency, Allen Dulles said he thought "it was one of the main coups of the time I was there."

For Angleton, obtaining the document was not enough. He has repeatedly told friends, and some reporters, that his office began planning a major disinformation operation even while the Eisenhower Administration was still debating whether to make the speech available to the press.

"What Jim did," one of his friends told me, "was to doctor the speech with some pejorative stuff and leak it to the neutrals, the Indians among them. They all swallowed it. There were nasty things about the heads of 15 or 20 governments that were written by Jim [i.e., the counterintelligence staff] and attributed to Khrushchev." The resulting furor, his friend said, was "a tremendous coup for Jim. It completely disrupted Communist efforts all over the world."

The fact, however, is that the Angleton plan was killed by higher officials before it could be put into operation. When one newspaper editor reproached Angleton recently for continuing to tell the story to reporters, Angleton replied, "Why not tell it? It muddies the water, doesn't it?"

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Angleton remained entrenched after Dulles was dismissed by President Kennedy in the wake of the Bay of Pigs fiasco of 1961. The colossal failure of intelligence and counterintelligence represented by that defeat did not seem to affect his position. The new director, John A. McCone, appeared to regard him as indispensable for the Kennedy Administration's program of third-world "nation building" as an answer to local revolutions. He was as intense as ever, and began to suffer physical distress. In 1959, he was hospitalized with what associates said was a case of tuberculosis that required extensive treatment. Once cured, however, he quickly got back into swing.

There was the new spirit of Camelot, with its heavy reliance on C.I.A. "dirty tricks." There was duck hunting at a colleague's private blind along the Potomac River. There were fishing trips to England and around the United States. There was the Angleton mystique.

One subordinate (and admirer) recounted how he and Angleton would meet at 4 A.M. to go duck-hunting in suburban Virginia. "He was a poet at heart. I never saw him take a shot. I'd make a noise and the ducks would fly up and that was enough beauty for Jim. He'd say, 'Why do you have to spoil things by shooting?' " Other C.I.A. officials, less in awe of his reputation, told of hunting trips during which Angleton fired often and well.

In the 60's, Angleton became friendly with Cord Meyer Jr., the World War II hero and past leader of the United World Federalist crusade, who had joined the C.I.A. in the early 50's and had evolved into a cold-warrior. Meyer, who had divorced his wife, was immensely attractive to women,

'The real question is: Did any of the directors know what Angleton's office was doing?'

and many of the bright young career women he dated in Washington came to know James Angleton.

"Jim was antisocial and did not go out," one of these women told me. "He really made a fetish of privacy, because he was in love with his notion of spookdom." Another woman who remembered "lunching a lot" with Meyer and Angleton found them argumentative at her small dinner parties — engaging in shouting matches with other guests over the degree of the Communist threat. "They always ended up by saying, 'You don't know what you're talking about. Only we know what's going on.' Every time you backed them into a corner, they would get out of it by saying that. My feeling was that they were playacting all the time, and the playacting took over their lives."

With these women, there were fewer secrets. "Cord had sort of a hero worship of Angleton," one of them said. "Cops and robbers sort of nonsense, I think. He once said to me in hushed tones, 'Do you know what Jim's job is? Head of , counterintelligence.'" Another woman recalled Angleton's telling her, also in hushed tones, that he was occupying the chair once occupied by William J. ("Wild Bill") Donovan, the wartime O.S.S. chief. This woman said she was always puzzled by the apparent contradiction between the two men's preoccupation with security and their occasional easy talk about their work.

Another woman recalled a bitter argument that had flared up when she told them what she had seen on a trip to the Soviet Union. "Cord said that I was not trained and didn't know what I was seeing." She retorted that, unlike him, she had actually been to the Soviet Union and had seen the place for herself, and this seemed to anger him deeply.

One young woman recalled a visit to the Angleton home. "I went out there for Christmas, and there were four or five spies from different countries playing nickel-ante poker. I bluffed them all constantly, and their hands began shaking as I won — every one of them. That scared the bejesus out of me. I thought to myself, 'My God, if this scares them so much, I wonder what happens in the office?'"

□

Through the 60's, as relations with the Communist countries changed, Angleton pressed his constant search for K.G.B. infiltrators, checking out the defectors that kept coming over from the "other side" and looking into their allegations of Communist moles inside the agency. After 1966, this work went on under a new director, Helms — like Angle-

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ton, a veteran of the agency's clandestine side. Helms left shortly after President Nixon's re-election, and in May 1973, after the shock of Watergate, an interim Director, James R. Schlesinger, ordered all his employees to tell him of any domestic activity by the C.I.A. they regarded as unauthorized or illegal. The order produced concern and controversy within the agency — and statements to the director totaling some 683 pages. Schlesinger thereupon made the first move — through one of his key deputies, William Colby — to reduce Angleton's powers. In a widespread reorganization, Angleton was forced to give up some of his personnel.

In September 1973, with Schlesinger appointed Secretary of Defense, Colby was moved up to the post of director. Colby made it his goal, first, to take the Israeli desk away from Angleton, and, second, to force him out of the agency. In his recent book, "Honorable Men," Colby writes, "I looked in vain for some tangible results in the counterintelligence field, and found little or none. I did not suspect Angleton and his staff of engaging in improper activities. I just could not figure out what they were doing at all."

By early 1974, I had learned of some of the repercussions of Schlesinger's order. By the second week of December 1974, Colby and Angleton knew I was working on a story on domestic spying by the C.I.A. On Dec. 18, 1974, the two men had what Angleton told friends was "a big fight." Colby offered him another assignment — to spend the rest of his C.I.A. career writing an extensive study of the doctrine of counterintelligence, complete with case studies. (Naturally, he would lose the Israeli account.) Colby later explained that he had assumed that Angleton would be outraged and would quit.

On Friday, Dec. 20, I went to see Colby, discussed many details of the domestic-spying story with him, and told him the first article would run that Sunday. This seems to have affected his tactics in the Angleton affair. He appears to have decided that it would look bad for the agency if he forced a top aide out after publication of a story charging that aide with breaking the law. So he decided to fire him immediately. He called Angleton in that same afternoon and demanded his resignation. Referring to the scheduled Times articles, he gave it as his opinion (or so Angleton told me) that "it'll all blow over in two or three days."

It didn't, of course, and Angleton's bitterness over what followed — the public shock, the White House and Congressional investigations, the moves to tighten controls over the C.I.A. — persists. The phone call in which he accused me of breaking up his marriage was, I can only deduce, meant to make me suffer for "blowing his cover," revealing the domestic spying operations and being responsible, in some way, for his dismissal. In another phone conversation, a few days later, he accused both me and The Times of "helping out the K.G.B. a great deal. You've done them a great service." That his cover had long been blown as far as the Soviets were concerned — for one thing, Philby had identified him by name and title in his 1968 book, "My Silent War" — was something he apparently chose to forget.

When I later told him that I wanted to write something more comprehensive about his career — he had, in the meantime, received the Distinguished Intelligence Medal, the C.I.A.'s highest award — he refused to grant me a formal interview and said, "You just go ahead and do what you want to do. The damage is pretty much irrevocable." The threat to national security posed by the domestic-spying revelations and his dismissal was, he assured me, far more extensive than I could possibly realize.

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In a phone conversation shortly after Angleton's exit, his chief deputy, Newton S. Miler, conveyed the bewilderment felt by men like him who had spent so great a part of their adult lives in what they perceived to be deadly battle against a deadly foe — and who now saw the American people criticizing the means they employed. "I think there's a very real need for concern about the K.G.B.," he said, "but I don't think people are going to heed it. I don't think they *want* to heed it."

Miler, who resigned after being told by Colby that he would not be chosen to replace his chief, was, in his quiet way, as bitter about the whole affair as Angleton. "It makes you wonder," he said, "what you've been doing for 30 years."

It would be easy to conclude this essay on a wistful note of sympathy for the loyal and single-

minded men who were victims of a change of perception they could not and would not comprehend. Yet some questions must be asked. Who have been the real victims in the era encompassed by the cold-war expertise of the C.I.A. — and of the K.G.B.? How many misconceptions on both sides were the product of the intelligence game? How did they affect the policies of the United States and the Soviet Union? In looking into the world of a James Angleton, one can't help wondering about the judgment that was regarded as unassailable when President John F. Kennedy voiced it, dedicating the C.I.A.'s new headquarters in 1961: "Your successes are unheralded; your failures are trumpeted." Was Kennedy right?

If we went deeper into that question, we might come to understand more. ■

Army (and C.I.A.) officer Cord Meyer: A case of hero worship.

James Schlesinger as C.I.A. head in 1973: A controversial order.

Soviet defector Nosenko: A K.G.B. plant in a scheme to undermine U.S. security?

Early C.I.A. chief Smith, left, and successor Dulles: Was "Jimmy" listening in?

Angleton's counterintelligence office was the most sacrosanct unit inside the C.I.A., a 'deep snow' section whose operations were kept secret even from other top officials. His was the twilight world of defectors, disinformation, deception and penetration. 'We had a job to do,' said one former C.I.A. official, 'and we did it.'